Takiyuki Hojo Tells How Japanese Teach Children.

"Konnoto-wa, Hojo San; do des ka'" "Arigato, itzumono tori yoroschu gozarimas'."

HAVING thus exchanged the classic Japanese greetings, I asked M. Hojo, one of Japan's greatest educationalists, to compare Japanese and English educational systems.

"This is my first visit to England," he replied. "Consequently, I have no opinion, so far, on English methods. But I can give you my views on Japanese schools and on education in general."

"Makotoni arigato gozarimas'" ("In truth I thank you").

"First of all, let me tell you that the education of children, whether boys or girls, must be carried on in schools. On my way to England I have spoken with parents who thought that the ideal way of bringing up a child and educating him was to give him a tutor at home. This is wrong. Children, more than grown-up persons, need companionship. The school, with the friendships to be made there—and perhaps enemies to be discovered—competition, games, noble rivalry, visible progress or the reverse—the school is indispensable to thorough education of the body, the mind, and the character."

"At what age," I asked, "do you think children ought to go to school?"

"At six; not before. I am told that in Germany and France babies of four are sent to school (I say school for lack of a better name), but that system is altogether foolish. Until the age of six the child's place is at home. He needs his father, and, still more, his mother—yes! his mother. It is really extraordinary what mothers, with their intuition and love, can do for children, even at this early age."

"Should he or she be strict?"

"Both should be most severe. We have a saying in Japan: 'Good parents are strict parents.'"

Those words were pronounced with great emphasis.

"How long," I asked, "should a child remain at school?"

"As long as possible. Of course, in certain cases, it is impossible to keep children longer than six years at school. Their parents want them—for the rice fields, the mines, the various trades—and in these cases the Sho gak wo (elementary school) has to be sufficient, but the number of children attending the Koto sho gak ko (nigh schools) is yearly increasing. Education is not only necessary to a human being, to make him worthy of the name, but it is indispensable to his usefulness in the world, and to enable him to live instead of merely existing."

I watched M. Hojo as he spoke. His energetic face, cold, distant, mask-like, and somewhat mysterious, was illuminated by conviction. The jet-black eyes glistened behind the round gold-rimmed spectacles, and little blue veins were swelling on the bulging forehead. The lips, of the color of wine, were ever mobile above the stern, square chin, and the nostrils quivered with passion.

"Do you believe in books?" was my next question.

M. Hojo sighed.

"One cannot do without them. But a careful, very careful selection has to be made. Professors and parents alike should be most particular about the books they give their pupils or children. A few excellent books are amply sufficient. They are a key to knowledge, an aid to study. They save time, but nothing else. The rest, the main part of the real work, has to come from those who know by experience, and from the students themselves. The great object of education, after all, is to teach young ones to think for themselves. In Japan we do not believe in memory. Our students must understand their lessons. The memory of words fade, but we never forget what we have once thoroughly grasped."

The next question I wished to ask the distinguished educationalist was delicate, but I had to deal with such a noble and broad-minded personality that I did not hesitate.

"What about religious education?" I asked.

"We are tolerant, for we know the meaning of liberty," was the reply. "In my school, at Hiroshima, I have Shintoist, Buddhist, and Christian students—all of them Japanese. It is so in most schools. We respect all convictions, all faiths, all religions—and discuss none. It is a simple method, and yields excellent results."

I could not help thinking that young Japan, with less than forty years of "Western" civilization to boast of, seemed in this subtle and important matter of tolerance far ahead of old Europe with its centuries of culture!

"Let us pass from psychology to physiology," I suggested. "Do you give an important place to physical training in Nippon?"

"Very much so. We have two kinds of tai-so (athletics): simple exercises and military exercises. Both have a great importance in my country. All our boys fence and practise jui-jitsu. We have also rifle practise in many schools, but, unfortunately, not yet in all of them. The boy must be trained to become a man, and even if he is never to shoot at anything but game, it is just as well that he should know how to shoot."

"Hojo San," I said, hesitatingly, "may one ask you what is the chief defect of the average Japanese schoolboy or student?"

"I love them too well to find fault with them when speaking to a foreigner," the professor retorted, with a wink of his little jet-black eyes.

"Are they perfect?" I insinuated, somewhat sarcastically.

"No; no boy or student—no old man is perfect."

"Are they truthful?"

I at once regretted to have asked that question. M. Hojo frowned fearfully.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, "Japanese students always speak the truth. In the land of the Rising Sun an educated man who would tell a lie would be done for, debased, ruined. We consider lying as the worst of sins and the most contemptible . . ."

I apologized; and afterwards I asked, with unconquerable logic:

"But if they are not perfect, those Japanese students, what is your chief complaint?"

M. Hojo hesitated, then whispered:

"They are too 'reasoning.' They argue; they always want to be right; they discuss with their masters, their professors, their directors. . . . A Japanese always wants to know 'why?' and 'why not?'"

M. Hojo laughed—with his eyes—in true Japanese style. He was obviously pleased with his answer. His hilarity encouraged me to ask another delicate question.

"How do you 'punish' in Japan? Do you—birch?"

"Never. Corporal punishment is not resorted to. We chastise with words, severe words—and with 'the teacher's face.'"

M. Hojo illustrated this special expression most eloquently. We both laughed. But the matter was serious, and interesting. The idea is that with a sharp, reproaching glance, a severe compression of the lips, the Japanese master can tell a great deal more than by the use of the national British birch. "Flogging with the eye" may require some training, but it is undoubtedly worth studying.

We passed to a more cheerful subject—the games of Japanese children.

"They play tei-kiu (lawn tennis), ya-kiu (baseball) and kiu jui-jitsu (bow and arrow)—they play . . . when they play. Our children, our students, understand that they must work, and work hard, for the welfare, for the greatness of their country. We do not waste our time in Japan, and study is a pleasure as well as an honor!"

After a hearty hand-shake M. Tokiyuki Hojo returned to the platform, and resumed his seat near the president of the International Moral Education congress, and as I left the University of London, passages from the famous educational treatises, the Zitu-go Kyau and the Do-zi Kyau, recurred to me, and I mentally repeated some of the old Japanese maxims:

"Mountains are not noble because they are high; they are noble because they have trees. Man is not noble because he is rich or stout, but because he has wisdom and learning."

"The wise Sonkei, in order to study, locked his door; the wise and poor Kyau-kau pierced a hole through his wall to study by moonlight; the wise Sosin pricked his legs with a pin when he studied so as not to fall asleep."

"When a tiger dies there remains his skin—when a man dies there remains his reputation."

R. DE CHATELEUX.

FIVE GE[illegible]

In the group above represented are five generations of the [illegible]mily, residing at Nephi, Utah. They are Mrs. Ann Ingram, her son John Ingram, his son John E. Ingram, his daughter Mrs. Goble and her daughter La Priel Goble. "Grandma" Ingram was born Oct. 11, 1819, and on May 28, 1848, was baptized with her husband by Elder Thomas Day. She is the mother of seven sons and two daug[illegible] has 66 grandchildren, 85 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren, making a total of 164 de[illegible]nts in the five generations. She emigrated to America in 1862 and her husband died at Newark, N. J. Two years later Mrs. Ingram came west and settled at Nephi. All the family are members of the Church. Mrs. Ingram lacks little of being 90 years old, but she attends to her own domestic affairs, moves around with ease and is enjoying perfect health.